

December 7

1812 The birth of representative government in Missouri. The house of representatives of the first territorial general assembly met in St. Louis at the home of Joseph Robidoux, between Walnut and Elm Streets.

1855 The St. Louis Building and Savings Association opened a tiny office at Main and Vine with one teller and \$8,500 in capital. The bank became Mercantile Trust in 1899, and named Festus J. Wade as the first president. The bank moved to 8th and Locust in 1902, planned the financing for the World's Fair and loaned money for Charles Lindbergh's flight. In 1999, Firststar of Milwaukee bought out Mercantile. US Bancorp has since acquired Firststar.

1869 The James Gang help up the Daviess County Savings Bank at Gallatin, Missouri and killed bank president John Sheets. Jesse James thought Sheets looked like the man who had killed guerilla leader "Bloody Bill" Anderson.

1905 Reverend Peter Dunne made an appeal to the St. Louis business community. He was seeking funds to build a home for "newsboys, bootblacks and all boys who are too old to find shelter at orphanages." Dunne promised to take in boys arrested for delinquency and make good men out of them. Father Dunne's home still cares for disadvantaged youth today.

1908 The city of St. Louis became the owner of a race track. The city planned to turn the 131-acre Fairgrounds Track site at Grand and Natural Bridge into a park. No races had been held there since 1904, when the legislature banned horse racing.

1914 Barnes Hospital opened, with 26 patients. The hospital was the dream of merchant Robert A. Barnes. When he died in 1892, he left his estate to build a hospital that would admit patients regardless of race. Also in late 1914, St. Louis Children's Hospital and the Washington University Medical School moved to Kingshighway from downtown. It marked the beginning of the present medical complex.

1922 Over 300 barrels of pre-prohibition whiskey disappeared from the Jack Daniels Distillery on Duncan Avenue. The whiskey, valued at nearly \$2 million, had been stored there by the U.S. government. The thieves siphoned the whiskey through a hose that ran into another building. About 25 prominent St. Louisans would be charged with conspiracy in the case. The charges against a congressman, a state senator and the operator of Jack Daniels were eventually dismissed.

1941 The news early on that Sunday morning included word that Mussie, one of the four black gorillas described as "The Pride of the St. Louis Zoo," had died of an intestinal ailment after an operation at Barnes Hospital. A group of 235 downtown merchants announced they would fight any plan to install parking meters. The *St. Louis*, a \$900,000 sub stratosphere airliner built here at Curtiss-Wright had arrived in England to transport British troops under the Lend-Lease Act.

1941 Governor Donnelly and St. Louis Mayor Dee Becker wasted no time in reacting to the news from Hawaii. Over 65,000 soldiers on leave from Fort Leonard Wood, Scott Field, and Jefferson Barracks were told to report for duty immediately. Detachments from Jefferson Barracks rushed to guard the bridges and the 12 largest private industrial plants. Mayor Becker said, "St. Louis is ready to take up its share of the burden." He said the city would immediately begin to set up agencies to accelerate production, promote civil defense, and prevent sabotage.

1941 There were about 140 St. Louisans at Pearl Harbor. Most were members of a naval reserve unit called to active duty in 1940. They served mostly on the destroyers *Schley*, *Allen*, and *Chew*, all World-War-One vintage four-stackers. Twelve St. Louisans died aboard the battleship *Arizona*.

1941 Lieutenant George A. Whiteman of Sedalia became the first American airman killed in World War Two. He was hit as he tried to take off to battle the Japanese pilots hitting Pearl Harbor. Whiteman Air Force Base outside Sedalia is named after him.

1947 Garry Unger was born in Calgary. In nine seasons with the Blues, the golden haired Number Seven set several team records that still stand. He played 662 games with the Blues, part of an NHL record "Iron Man" streak of 914 consecutive games. Today, Unger is involved in the operation of the Tulsa Drillers minor league team.

1958 The *Globe-Democrat* reported that city leaders were discussing the possibility of a new stadium on the St. Louis riverfront. August A. Busch Junior, the Chairman of Civic Progress, said he was 100 percent in favor of the idea.

1959 A McDonnell F-Four-H "Phantom Two" set an unofficial world altitude record of 98,560-feet. Commander Laurence Flint piloted it.

1962 John George Taylor Spink died at the age of 74. He ran the St. Louis-based *Sporting News* for 48 years, and was instrumental in uncovering the "Black Sox" scandal during the 1919 World Series. The Baseball Writer's Association established a writer's award in his name at the Baseball Hall of Fame.

1964 A general-alarm fire saved workers the trouble of tearing down one of the buildings that stood in the path of the approaches to the Poplar Street Bridge. The fire destroyed the old Bemis Brothers Bag Company at 601 North Fourth Street.

1966 Disaster was narrowly averted at Lambert Field. A janitor discovered a TNT bomb beneath the seats in the crowded main waiting room. The terminal was evacuated moments before it exploded. It blew out the big windows in the waiting room, but no one was hurt.

1973 The Cardinals traded pitchers Reggie Cleveland and Diego Segui along with infielder Terry Hughes to the Red Sox for pitchers Lynn McGlothen, John Curtis and Mike Garman.